Mission to El Salvador

FREEDOM HOUSE

SPECIAL REPORT

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Freedom House Special Report

1 May 1989

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Mission to El Salvador

(Freedom House special report)
1. Election monitoring—El Salvador. 2. Presidents—El Salvador—Election—1989. 3. Elections—El Salvador. 4. El Salvador—Politics and government—1979-
I. Freedom House (U.S.) II. Series.
JL1578.M57 1989 324.97284'053 89-11992
ISBN 0-932088-43-0

Preface

This report is based on the work of a six-member Freedom House observer mission to the 19 March 1989 presidential election in El Salvador. The observer mission was led by Freedom House trustee Ambassador Angier Biddle Duke and Freedom House Executive Director R. Bruce McColm. William C. Doherty, Jr., Freedom House trustee and executive director of the American Institute for Free Labor Development of the AFL-CIO, also monitored the election as a member of the official U.S. observer delegation.

The other members of the mission were Douglas W. Payne, Freedom House hemispheric studies director; Walter Naegle, executive director of the Bayard Rustin Fund; Barbara Futterman, Freedom House Exchange coordinator; and journalist Biddle Duke.

Mr. Payne is the principal author of this report.

Freedom House extends its gratitude to the International Rescue Committee, especially Robyn Ziebert, IRC regional director for Central America, for advance preparation and logistical assistance.

Freedom House is an independent nonprofit organization that monitors human rights and political freedom around the world. Established in 1941, Freedom House believes that effective advocacy of civil rights at home and human rights abroad must be grounded in fundamental democratic values and principles.

In international affairs, Freedom House continues to focus attention on human rights violations by oppressive regimes, both of the left and the right. At home, we stress the need to guarantee all citizens not only equal rights under law, but equal opportunity for social and economic advancement.

Introduction

The Freedom House observer mission to the 19 March 1989 presidential election in El Salvador continues a long tradition of election monitoring around the world. In the last decade Freedom House has observed and assessed electoral processes in Zimbabwe, El Salvador, Panama, Nicaragua, Grenada, the Philippines, Guatemala, Haiti, Suriname and Chile.

Freedom House's report on the 1984 presidential election in El Salvador, "Civilianizing El Salvador," appeared in its bimonthly magazine, *Freedom at Issue*, July-August, 1984.

Preparations for the 1989 El Salvador mission began in June 1988 with a report based on a five-day visit to San Salvador by Mr. Payne (Douglas W. Payne, "Saving El Salvador," *Freedom at Issue*, September-October, 1988).

In February 1989, Freedom House trustee and *New Republic* senior editor Morton M. Kondracke, Freedom House senior associate Penn Kemble and Mr. Payne were members of a Congressional fact-finding delegation to El Salvador led by Congressman Dave McCurdy (D-Oklahoma). (See "Salvador's Silver Lining," Morton M. Kondracke, *The New Republic*, 13 March 1989, and "Help for El Salvador—With Conditions," Dave McCurdy, *Washington Post*, 6 April 1989.)

The observer mission spent seven days in El Salvador, from 15 March to 21 March. During that time, and during the February Congressional fact-finding mission, members of the Freedom House delegation met with President Jose Napoleon Duarte and the major presidential candidates. Members also met with the president of the Central Electoral Council, the minister of defense and other military leaders, human rights advocates, trade union representatives, journalists, political and military analysts, university and student leaders, and officials of the U.S. government including Ambassador William G. Walker. On the day of the vote, Freedom House representatives spread

out around the country, monitoring the vote in San Salvador and seven of the other thirteen departments, including two in conflictive areas.

This report begins with an "Overview" of the 19 March election and the prospects for strengthening El Salvador's developing, yet fragile, democracy. The report continues with sections on political, social and economic background; evaluations of the human rights situation and the electoral process; an assessment of the electoral outcome; and an analysis of the leftwing guerrilla movement.

NOTE: A list of all meetings, and a list of all departments and towns monitored on the day of the vote, appear at the end of this report in Appendices I and II.

OVERVIEW

In the 19 March presidential election, one million Salvadorans went to the polls and gave Alfredo Cristiani of the National Republican Alliance (ARENA) a first-round victory over Fidel Chavez Mena of the incumbent Christian Democratic Party (PDC). For the first time in the nation's history, one democratically elected government is transferring power to another.

Unintimidated by the nationwide guerrilla offensive and campaign of fear launched by the Marxist-Leninist Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN), over half the eligible voters (54 percent) showed the same determination and dedication to the democratic process that had been seen in five previous elections.

Overseen by the Central Electoral Council, an autonomous government agency, the voting and the count were both conducted in a free, fair and efficient manner. Despite the guerrilla violence, voting took place in over 90 percent of the country, and the military was generally unobtrusive while securing the polling stations.

The FMLN claimed that the turnout, low by Salvadoran standards, proved the process was not legitimate. But its logic, and its violent tactics, were roundly rejected by the FMLN's own allies who ran in the election, more than a hundred international observers, and Latin America's democratic leadership, including President Oscar Arias of Costa Rica, President Carlos Andres Perez of Venezuela, and Joao Baena Soares, secretary general of the Organization of American States.

In the end, the Salvadoran people had given Cristiani a strong mandate to relieve economic distress, stop government corruption, and bring the war to a close. However, as he prepares to take office, Cristiani faces daunting challenges, both as the new leader of

concrete assistance to the FMLN in order to poke both superpowers in the eye.

The ARENA question

There is little doubt about Cristiani's honesty and personal integrity. But throughout the campaign, he had to address the question of ARENA's two faces: Who runs the party, he or Roberto d'Aubuisson?

ARENA was founded in 1981 by d'Aubuisson with the financial support of the old oligarchy. A fiery caudillo and former army officer linked to the death squads, d'Aubuisson preached violent anti-communism and the absolute sanctity of private property. However, two straight electoral defeats led to a stiff battle within the party. Cristiani, leader of a more moderate group of businessmen and professionals, emerged as head of ARENA. That marked the first step in the process to transform a caudillo-led, nationalist movement into a modern, democratic political party.

Cristiani then led the effort to democratize the internal decision-making process. ARENA's executive committee was enlarged to fourteen members, and the party platform became subject to approval by a broad range of regional leaders and interest groups within the party. Regional and national conventions were instituted for the selection of electoral candidates.

D'Aubuisson, with his death-squad and old money links presumably intact, nonetheless retains a seat for life on the executive committee. Three other former military officers also have seats.

Cristiani stated that he will be able to implement his government program without interference. And indeed the Salvadoran Constitution endows the executive with extensive powers. He also expects his first-round victory to strengthen his position in the party. He vowed that neither d'Aubuisson nor Sigifredo Ochoa, another

prominent ARENA hardliner, would receive cabinet positions; their role would be to continue as legislators in the national assembly.

If d'Aubuisson and company do have a hidden agenda, the only apparent legal channel through which they can carry it out is the legislature. ARENA holds 32 out of 60 seats, but the hardliners do not control all of them. Cristiani's current strength in the party will become apparent when the assembly selects the new Supreme Court in May. He has vowed that judicial reform is a priority. The current Court is dominated by the right and heavily politicized.

An early measure of Cristiani's political strength was his quick and decisive intervention in April to overturn an arbitrary lower court ruling that lifted kidnapping charges against a group of d'Aubuisson associates. As Cristiani sought and received the support of the Supreme Court and the minister of defense, d'Aubuisson appeared to stay away from the issue. But the potential for conflict between the two tendencies within ARENA remains. A crisis within the party, possibly even a split, could be the outcome if the d'Aubuisson wing tires of legal recourse and resorts to paramilitary actions, either to hamstring Cristiani's ability to govern, intensify the war, or both.

A related and ominous factor is the wave of FMLN terrorist attacks against ARENA people and property in the wake of the election, an apparent effort to provoke d'Aubuisson and Ochoa en route to repolarizing the country. The guerrillas stated in April they would make the country "ungovernable." The FMLN's immediate aim is to provoke a rightwing backlash; the endgame, a cutoff of U.S. aid, remains the same. Cristiani said he might have to order a state of emergency, but stated he would not tolerate unlawful retribution. The Cristiani administration will have to deal with the fact that violence in El Salvador, as in many other struggling Latin American democracies, is the symbiotic link between the anti-democratic forces of the left and the right.

Gen. Vides Casanova, the minister of defense, has been a moderating influence on the military and a major force against violent repolarization. During his tenure, the armed forces have not only grown, but have also made significant strides in professional conduct and respect for human rights. Retaining Vides, or finding a worthy replacement who can effect still-needed improvement, will be one of Cristiani's crucial first tasks.

Cristiani's standards

Ultimately, the Cristiani administration will be judged, particularly in Washington, the source of critical U.S. aid, by the set of high standards Cristiani himself has established.

He vowed to strengthen democracy and increase respect for human rights. He pledged to reform the judiciary, the key to establishing a credible rule of law.

He said he would seek a political, not a military solution to the war. He said he was willing to negotiate with the FMLN on the issue of its integration into the democratic system, but not over power.

He pledged to root out corruption in government by reducing the state's role in the economy, but not renew concentration of property in the hands of the rich. He said his government would fully respect trade union rights, and make land reform more efficient, not roll it back. He said his market approach to economics would enhance, not undermine, needed social programs.

These are challenging goals and standards. But the legitimacy and decisiveness of his victory in March have won him the opportunity to meet them.

Institutionalizing a multi-party democracy

Also important will be the ability of the Christian Democrats to regroup after a disappointing performance and assume their role in

the opposition. Cristiani, noting that the PDC had won over a third of the votes, said he looked forward to cooperation, that his would not be a sectarian government. The PDC nonetheless must overcome a number of obstacles.

President Duarte gallantly battled against terminal cancer, looking forward to handing over the presidential sash to Cristiani on 1 June. The act would cap a career in which he personally oversaw the coming of democracy to El Salvador. But his diminished capacity was already evident during the campaign. And while Chavez Mena is expected to rebound from his defeat, the PDC faces the prospect of having to nurture a whole new generation of leaders.

As for the Democratic Convergence, it confronts some critical choices. Throughout the campaign, it looked as if it had become the third force in Salvadoran politics. But it was edged out for third place in the vote, denying it a seat on the CCE. Not having run in the 1988 legislative and municipal elections, it therefore has no presence in any branch of government.

After the election, CD leaders acknowledged that their alliance with the FMLN was what hurt them most. They suggested the CD would seek new alliances. However, if they are to establish themselves as the democratic left in El Salvador and not appear to the electorate as simply an FMLN front, they may have to reconsider their relationship with the guerrillas. Given the FMLN's record of assassinating former friends, deciding on a new tack will not be easy.

The CD's participation in the campaign strengthened the legitimacy of El Salvador's democratic process. If the CD is to have a future in that process, it will have to consider how to strengthen its own legitimacy. But while the relationship between the FMLN and the CD appeared to be in flux after the election, Guillermo Ungo and other CD leaders allied with the FMLN were unsure exactly what direction they would take.

The year ahead

Beginning with the constituent assembly election in 1982, Salvadorans have strengthened their democracy by actively participating in six free and fair elections. They have done so in difficult circumstances, as the democratic system remains under attack by violence from both the left and the right. They have now elected a second civilian president and given him a strong mandate to reduce corruption, poverty and violence.

How to transform a densely populated, essentially agrarian society with chronic unemployment into a viable economy remains one of the most difficult economic and social problems in Latin America. Addressing these problems during a war makes the task even more challenging. But not doing so risks exacerbating the conflict, as the Christian Democrats discovered.

The Duarte administration deserves credit for strengthening El Salvador's democratic system. But the Salvadoran people have now asked Cristiani to bring about the social and economic progress the Christian Democrats failed to deliver, while preserving the democracy through which they elected him. He appears well-equipped to tackle both tasks, but remains untested. Unless he falters on the latter, however, he is deserving of support.

I. BACKGROUND

The ongoing political transition in this small, densely populated country of approximately 5.1 million began with the 1979 coup by junior military officers. The event marked the first substantial breach in the historical ruling alliance between the military and the landed oligarchy. The new ruling junta of reform-minded officers and long-denied, democratic political leaders attempted to effect a partial democratic opening. The new alignment, however, led to a civil war between those on the right seeking a return to the authoritarian past, and the FMLN which sought to duplicate the 1979 Sandinista takeover in Nicaragua.

Before, during and after the FMLN's attempted "final offensive" in January 1981, tens of thousands of Salvadorans were killed, mainly civilians and mostly by the antidemocratic right that retained control of key sectors in the military, particularly the state security forces. The FMLN, aiming to spark a national insurrection, borrowed the Sandinista tactics of urban terrorism and rural guerrilla warfare to provoke further repression. In that it succeeded. However, when the FMLN called for a decisive national uprising at the end of 1980 to hand the incoming Reagan administration a *fait accompli*, the necessary popular support failed to materialize. In fact, and instead, a majority of Salvadorans expressed their support for a peaceful, democratic transition by turning out for national elections only a year later.

The 1982 constituent assembly election, the drafting of a new constitution in 1983, and the election of President Jose Napoleon Duarte in 1984 transformed, at least formally, a military-dominated political system into a civilian-ruled democracy. The high voter turnout in each election, in the face of violent attempts at disruption by both the authoritarian right and the FMLN, showed a clear mandate for representative, civilian rule.

However, as the Freedom House observer team noted at the time ("Civilianizing El Salvador," *Freedom at Issue*, July-August 1984), the electoral process did not immediately alter the power balance of the country. The imposing yet crucial task of consolidating democracy and ensuring the rule of law lay ahead. Due to U.S. support of the process, however, and the assistance of democratic allies in the region, the civilian leadership was given the opportunity to assert an authority it had been unable to exert before.

With bipartisan backing in Washington and continued U.S. economic and military aid, Duarte's Christian Democratic government vowed to complete the transition. It would seek to establish a new tradition of civilian authority over a professional, politically neutral military, as well as an independent, assertive judiciary. Given the assurance of a rule of law for the first time in the nation's history, the extreme right and extreme left would become isolated and eventually marginalized in the Salvadoran political landscape. And since the extreme right and the FMLN—each already weakened by the majority's strong support for the democratic process—were the only elements whose interests would be served by continued violence, the civil war would eventually wind down.

The prospects appeared promising during the first year of the Duarte administration. The disbanding of the nefarious intelligence unit of the Treasury Police capped a dramatic reduction in right-wing political killings. A new military leadership pledged full support for the democratic process and brought an unprecedented professionalism to the prosecution of the counterinsurgency war. In the new political atmosphere, labor unions and left-leaning political groups were able for the first time to assert themselves in relative security. At the same time, the FMLN's hypermilitaristic strategy estranged many former supporters, greatly diminishing its forces.

It was from a position of political strength, therefore, that Duarte

sought to end the war through negotiations in late 1984. When the FMLN rejected his offer to disarm and compete for power within the democratic system, instead demanding a share of power and the incorporation of its guerrilla army as a parallel unit of the military, talks broke off. However, when the Christian Democrats won a majority of seats in the 1985 legislative elections a few months later, the message of continued support for Duarte was clear. It was a marginalized FMLN that then resorted to terror, economic sabotage, and a direct attack on the presidency itself.

In September 1985, three months after killing four U.S. Marines, two American civilians and seven Salvadorans in a San Salvador cafe—"only the beginning," the FMLN stated—the guerrillas kidnapped Duarte's daughter. Duarte's administration, and Duarte himself, never fully recovered from the ordeal which paralyzed the country for months. The denouement, the exchange of over a hundred FMLN prisoners for his daughter's release, drained Duarte emotionally and, most significantly, diminished his authority in the eyes of the military.

The FMLN was roundly criticized, but it could revel in the hard blow—"our biggest victory so far"—it had inflicted upon the cooperative pact between the military and the civilian leadership. The guerrilla leaders knew that pact was central to consolidating the democracy that threatened their extinction. The FMLN, having lost the battle for popular support, now aimed to destroy the democratic system.

In the ensuing years, the FMLN's grim campaigns of bombings, burnings and civilian assassinations, as well as sustained attacks on the nation's economic infrastructure, exerted centrifugal pressure on, but did not break, the democratic ruling alignment. Sectors of the military strained against, and at times crossed, the parameters of humane and effective counterinsurgency warfare. But senior officers, in particular Defense Minister Gen. Carlos Eugenio Vides Casanova,

convinced their forces that resorting to severe repression would mean a halt to U.S. aid, and thereby hand the FMLN its chief *political* objective. At the same time, the military was growing anxious over the failings of the civilian administration.

After 1985, infighting among the Christian Democrats increased. Factions publicly vied for party control and used government spoils, including U.S. economic aid, to strengthen their positions. Momentum for reform, especially in the key area of the judiciary, came to a halt.

Government corruption, coupled with statist economic measures stamped into law by the Christian Democratic legislative majority, alienated the private sector and the democratic right. Economic growth was undermined by FMLN sabotage, declining investment, and the 1986 earthquake. As a result, the government failed to deliver on its campaign promises to provide services and assistance to the labor and peasant sectors of society. The FMLN seized the opportunity to penetrate disaffected sectors of the labor movement and rebuild confrontational front groups. The military refused to overreact, but it did press the Duarte administration for more responsible government. Then, in August 1987, Duarte received a boost with the signing of Esquipulas II, which altered the political landscape in El Salvador.

II. ESQUIPULAS II AND THE NEW POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

The internationally acclaimed accord provided for a ceasefire, a halt to outside assistance to insurgencies, an amnesty, dialogue, respect for human rights, and complete democratization in all five Central American countries. It contained no provision for power-sharing, thereby denying the principal FMLN demand. And second, it confirmed the legitimacy of El Salvador's constitutionally elected government, negating the FMLN's chief contention that El Salvador was still a dictatorship.

The FMLN was therefore even more on the political defensive with the approach of new negotiations under the regional accord. But the murder on 26 October 1987 of Herbert Anaya, a prominent human rights figure, appeared to give it a convenient pretext to shun the talks and continue its campaign of terror and sabotage, which it did.

No organization has ever claimed responsibility for the death squad-style killing. While it is known that the extreme right has always opposed negotiations with the guerrillas, circumstantial evidence incriminating the FMLN for Anaya's death has subsequently emerged. No matter who is responsible, however, the murder and its effect underscore the fact that violence in El Salvador, as in many other struggling Latin American democracies, is the symbiotic link between the antidemocratic forces of the left and the right.

Duarte sought to maintain the political initiative by implementing an amnesty in November 1987, pardoning nearly all violent political crimes committed before 22 October 1987. But the amnesty was controversial at best. It undercut all previous U.S. attempts to bring rightest killers and murderous military officers to justice, and freed some 480 leftist prisoners, many of whom returned to the FMLN guerrilla ranks.

The amnesty and the failed negotiations, however, were soon overshadowed by the return in late 1987 of Ruben Zamora and Guillermo Ungo, the exiled political leaders of the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR). In the new atmosphere of political opening fostered by Esquipulas II, they finally accepted Duarte's standing offer to participate in the democratic process. While the military grumbled at their refusal to disavow their alliance with the FMLN, Ungo and Zamora successfully entered mainstream politics.

In early 1988 they formed the Democratic Convergence, a political alliance of Ungo's National Revolutionary Movement (MNR), Zamora's Popular Social Christian Movement (MPSC), and Reni Roldan's Social Democratic Party (PSD). With little time to prepare for the March 1988 legislative election, the Democratic Convergence aimed instead for the 1989 presidential contest. It hoped to emerge as the third party in Salvadoran politics after the Christian Democrats and ARENA.

The return of Ungo and Zamora was one of the most significant developments in El Salvador since the 1984 election of Duarte. Their acceptance of the electoral process amounted to an implicit recognition of the government's legitimacy. The fact that they were able to operate in relative freedom and security in the year leading up to the presidential election reinforced that legitimacy. For the first time since 1972, the Salvadoran electorate had the option of voting for a leftist political program.

In the early 1980s most leaders of the democratic left who were not killed left the country and joined the FMLN. They believed their only hope for political and physical survival lay in a pact with the guerrillas. Therefore, until the return of the FDR leaders, no party had represented the democratic left, a sector comprised of social democrats and leftist professionals, unionists, Christians, students and intellectuals. In the polarized environment of 1980, many of these

also had joined the guerrillas, swelling FMLN ranks to over 12,000. But unlike the FMLN leadership, they were not Marxist-Leninists and, following the elections of the mid-1980s, thousands left the guerrillas to return to society. By 1987, guerrilla ranks had been reduced by at least half.

The return of Ungo and Zamora was preceded by the voluntary repatriation of thousands of refugees who had swelled camps in Honduras in the early 1980s. A steady stream of individual repatriations began after the 1984 election. Word that they were not subject to repression reached the camps, resulting in the first mass repatriation in August 1987. Under the auspices of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and with the cooperation of Salvadoran authorities, over 4,000 refugees from the Mesa Grande camp were resettled in El Salvador. Two subsequent migrations in 1988 brought the total resettlement through mass repatriation to approximately 6,000. The UNHCR estimates that the total of individual and mass repatriations from 1984 to the end of 1988 was around 13,000, with more mass repatriations expected in 1989.

A majority of the newly resettled are actively sympathetic to the FMLN and have been subject to sporadic intimidation by the military, according to the UNHCR and other international organizations. But there have been no confirmed killings by the military. The three murders registered by the UNHCR as of early 1989 were "executions" performed and publicly announced by the FMLN.

The FDR, aware of the dramatic reduction in official repression, the growing isolation of the FMLN, and the new political environment after Esquipulas II, therefore chose to return to party politics. Ungo, Zamora and their aides were regularly interviewed by the media and participated in unprecedented radio and television debates that included all political parties. They also benefited from the emergence of a new, centrist-oriented daily newspaper, *El Mundo*. For the

Democratic Convergence, newly formed and short on funds, free media access became the primary mode of national exposure.

The Convergence also was able to hold numerous conferences, rallies and meetings without interference. Assisted by the Socialist International, in June 1988 Ungo's MNR sponsored in San Salvador an unprecedented meeting of representatives of the democratic left from around the hemisphere. Eight months later, the MNR hosted a second gathering, cosponsored by the Socialist International and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU). The second meeting was addressed by both Fidel Chavez Mena and the labor minister of the Christian Democratic government. It was the first time Christian Democrats and democratic socialists had gathered together in El Salvador in nearly a decade.

Another event that confirmed the breadth of the new political landscape was the "National Debate" sponsored by the Catholic Church. In July and August 1988, over sixty university, labor, indigenous, religious and rights groups gathered in a series of meetings, covered by the media, to discuss national questions. The event in itself reinforced the fact that Salvadorans are compulsive yet peaceful organizers when given the freedom and opportunity.

At the end of the discussions, the participants were polled on an array of issues. Given that a majority were considered leftist or left-leaning, and that FMLN front groups actively participated, the responses on key questions were particularly significant. Participants who believed the economy to be the principal national problem outnumbered by nearly 2 to 1 those who felt it was the war. Those who believed the human rights situation had gotten better outnumbered by nearly 2 to 1 those who felt it had gotten worse. Nearly two-thirds of all the groups surveyed firmly rejected the armed actions of *both* the FMLN and the military, and expressed support for negotiations to end the fighting. (*Estudios Centroameri-*

canos, Universidad Centroamericana, San Salvador, August-September 1988.)

In 1986, the FMLN tacitly acknowledged the widening political space when it began rebuilding student and labor front groups in the cities. And despite common knowledge that these groups are closely linked to the guerrillas, anti-government demonstrations, often violent, have been tolerated. In comparison to the repression of the early 1980s, the restraint exhibited by the military and the public security forces in the face of obvious provocation by these front groups has been remarkable.

The return to El Salvador of Mario Orlando Aguinada also should be noted. Aguinada is a longtime leader of the Communist Party of El Salvador (PCES), one of the five organizations that form the FMLN. Since 1969 he has been the secretary general of the National Democratic Union (UDN), the PCES's electoral front. In exile for nearly a decade, Aguinada returned at the end of 1988. And while the UDN did not run in the presidential election and its intentions remain unclear, it has nonetheless been able to reopen its San Salvador office and participate in political activities.

III. HUMAN RIGHTS

While political space has widened significantly, the limits are still often marked by murder at both ends of the political spectrum. The rise in political killings since late 1987, has been, in fact, a function of the increased isolation of the extremes of left and right in the new political landscape after Esquipulas II. It has also been a function of the recent electoral activity; since 1982, both extremes have consistently targeted the electoral process.

The amnesty administered in November 1987, as prescribed by the Esquipulas II accord, was also a factor in the rise in human rights abuses. All violent political crimes committed prior to 22 October 1987, with the exception of the 1980 murder of Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero, were pardoned. Notorious cases like the 1980 murder of the American nuns and the 1981 murder of the American and Salvadoran land reform specialists were wiped from the books. The amnesty therefore provided a renewed sense of impunity for extremists seeking to violently disrupt the democratic process.

Political killings committed by the military and military-linked death squads were at their height in 1980-82, reaching about 800 per month. According to Tutela Legal, the Catholic Church's human rights office, there were just 24 death squad murders for all of 1987. During the first four months of 1988, which includes the period before the March legislative and municipal elections, the figure was 21, a jump of nearly 300 percent. The rate leveled off during the remainder of the year. A total of 60 death squad killings were recorded for 1988, 38 in the first six months, dropping to 22 in the last half of the year.

Tutela Legal also reported a slight rise in the number of civilian deaths attributable to the military and security forces, from 72 in

1987 to 85 in 1988. Of the 85, 51 occurred during the first six months, dropping to 34 in the last half of the year.

Political killings by death squads and the military therefore occurred in 1988 at a rate of 12 per month, down from the 800 per month at the outset of the decade. Preliminary figures made available in March by Tutela Legal showed that the rate of killings remained approximately the same in the first two months of 1989.

Assassinations by the FMLN, according to Tutela Legal, rose from 33 in 1987 to 41 in 1988, 18 in the first half of the year, rising to 23 in the second half. Civilian deaths caused by land mines of unknown origin, but widely used by the FMLN, rose from 29 in 1987 to 65 in 1988. The extensive use of land mines by the FMLN is evident in Tutela Legal's estimate that approximately 40 percent of army casualties are caused by FMLN-planted mines.

Tutela Legal further reported that in 1988 the guerrillas committed at least one civilian massacre while wearing Salvadoran army uniforms. Also, the FMLN's systematic use of urban car bombs beginning in November 1988 had resulted in the death of at least five civilians by March 1989.

While both the armed forces and the guerrillas have killed suspected collaborators, FMLN assassinations are the stated policy of the guerrilla high command and are publicly announced as the exacting of "revolutionary justice." The FMLN has also far exceeded the right and the military in killing prominent figures. No major leftist politician, student organizer, or FMLN front-group leader was killed by the right in the fifteen months prior to the March election. In turn, the FMLN has claimed credit for assassinating nine mayors, one provincial governor and several trade union leaders. The FMLN's publicly declared campaign against the municipal government system had driven 137 of 262 mayors from office by March 19.

Underlying all human rights abuses, however, is the absence of

an effective system of justice in a society that traditionally suffers from a lack of accountability. El Salvador's judicial system remains one of the weakest links in the nation's democratic process.

Prior to 1983, the criminal justice system was in a state of collapse. As determined by the International Commission of Jurists, the judiciary had been made impotent through intimidation by security forces or death squads. Many of the most competent lawyers and judges had either been attacked, murdered or driven into exile. The 1983 Constitution strengthened the rights of citizens, at least on paper, and for the first time in Salvadoran history the accused legally enjoyed the presumption of innocence. But despite the frequently stated desire of Salvadorans to establish a state of law, the justice system continued to be held hostage to politics and intimidation.

Despite the existence of a Christian Democratic government, the right has maintained a lock on the Supreme Court through its power in the Legislative Assembly. In December 1988, amid great controversy, the Court closed the case of the 1980 murder of Archbishop Romero. It ruled that evidence presented by a key witness, implicating powerful members of the extreme right including ARENA founder Major Roberto d'Aubuisson, was not credible because it was presented seven years after the killing. However, there is no legal time limit for presenting evidence, and the witness, who passed lie detector tests, was deemed credible by both the Salvadoran government and the U.S. Embassy.

In its overall aid package to El Salvador, the U.S. includes funds for reform of the judicial system, $9.1 million in 1988. By the end of 1988, however, the aid was not effectively translating into leverage for reform. U.S. prodding on structural reform of the judiciary or specific human rights cases continued to be stonewalled by the military, and criticized by government officials as interference in the internal affairs of the country. However, following the February 1989

visit by Vice-President Quayle, who warned military and judicial officials that continued U.S. aid was contingent on greater respect for human rights, unprecedented steps were taken toward the prosecution of officers involved in the murder of civilians.

On 21 September 1988, troops of the 5th Brigade killed ten peasants near the town of San Sebastian in central San Vicente province. The military initially claimed the people were killed in an ambush by the FMLN. However, on 12 March, after hard lobbying by the U.S. Embassy and specific emphasis on the case by Vice-President Quayle, the military announced that it was turning over to the civilian courts two army officers accused of responsibility in the massacre. Three days later, a civilian judge indicted and jailed the two officers, as well as seven soldiers, for their alleged role in the slayings. The judge said the accused would stand trial before a jury of five in the months ahead.

Despite evidence linking the military to the killings of thousands of civilians, mostly in the early years of the war, it was the first time officers had been indicted for murder, torture or other rights-related offenses and jailed on the order of a civilian judge. Tutela Legal, while noting the rise in human rights violations since late 1987, says that the recent abuses, unlike those in the first half of the decade, have not been sanctioned by the upper levels of the military or the institution as a whole. It is hoped that the high command's unprecedented performance on the San Sebastian case marks another step forward. Only if other cases are dealt with in similar fashion, however, will the sense of immunity among defiant officers be removed.

The pending trial in the San Sebastian case will be closely monitored, as will the military's internal investigation into other cases, including the killing of a Salvadoran photographer and the wounding of another by soldiers on the eve of the 19 March election.

Both men, free-lancers for Reuters news agency, were shot at a military checkpoint. In response to a Reuters request for an inquiry, the soldiers were placed in custody pending the outcome of a military investigation. The military high command stated that it regretted the incident, that local and international journalists could operate freely in El Salvador as long as they carried correct credentials and their vehicles were clearly identified as having the proper military passes.

IV. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL FACTORS

Despite progress in establishing democratic procedures, widening political space and reducing human rights violations, the Christian Democratic government failed to solve the social and economic problems that underlie the civil conflict.

From 1979 to 1983, economic output in El Salvador fell by 28 percent. Without U.S. aid it would have plunged further. Total U.S. military and economic aid over the last eight years is approximately $3.3 billion, of which approximately $2.4 billion is economic aid. Economic aid, however, has been nearly offset by an estimated $1.9 billion in damage to the nation's economic infrastructure as a result of FMLN sabotage. Much of the overall aid has also been lost because of government incompetence and corruption within both the government and the military.

The Salvadoran economy has nonetheless shown signs of recovery. Measured by gross domestic product (GDP) it has grown each year since 1983. Despite the extensive damage caused by the October 1986 earthquake, it recorded an almost 3 percent growth rate in 1987 and a significant drop in inflation.

Increasing levels of violence in 1988, however, led to a drop in fresh investment from abroad and a new wave of capital flight. The export sector of the economy was specifically targeted by the FMLN for sabotage. Due to natural causes and declining prices on the world market, there was also a sharp drop in the value of coffee, by far the nation's leading export. The net result was a decline in the economic growth rate in 1988 to 1 percent.

Further decline was expected in 1989. The winter coffee harvest, begun in November, ended in December rather than February with the smallest yield in thirty years. The trees had flowered early because of good rains, but hurricane winds blew the flowers off. Then came a drought. The coffee industry also came under direct attack

by the FMLN. The guerrillas hoped to drive into their ranks peasants who depend on the coffee harvest for most of their annual income. The FMLN has for years imposed a "war tax" on coffee farmers. Those who banded together in 1988 and refused to pay had their farms attacked and their houses and crops burned by the guerrillas.

The projected social costs of continued economic decline and inequity are ominous. Despite the 3 percent growth rate, per capita income in 1987 was $899, 27 percent lower than 1978 levels. The total of unemployment and underemployment was estimated at between 35 and 50 percent at the beginning of 1989.

The land reform program initiated in 1980 provided for cooperatives in which approximately a quarter of the rural poor now participate. The program, by addressing one of the FMLN's main demands, was instrumental in undercutting rural support for the guerrillas. But because of the war, insufficient technical aid, and the millions of dollars in debt the new owners acquired to compensate former landlords, at least half of the farming cooperatives formed are almost bankrupt.

Also, the traditional problem of scarce water resources has intensified in recent years. Just over 1 in 10 Salvadoran peasants had access in 1988 to safe drinking water, down from 3 in 10 in 1984. This has been a major factor in the surge in infant mortality to 91 deaths per 1,000 live births.

The state of the economy and the war have also created a flood of refugees; it is estimated that nearly 1 out of every 5 Salvadorans is now living outside the country, mostly in the U.S. Dollars sent home have become a major source of hard currency in the national economy, and the primary source of income for many Salvadorans. Several hundred thousand more refugees are scattered throughout the country and depend on assistance from international and church agencies.

Economic and social issues, as well as government corruption, were at the fore of the March 1988 electoral campaign and key factors in ARENA's victory at that time. Prior to the release of the FMLN's proposal on January 24, these issues were at the fore again. In the long run, however, how to transform a densely populated, essentially agrarian society with chronic unemployment into a viable economy remains one of the most challenging economic and social problems in Latin America.

V. THE CAMPAIGN

The presidential campaign kicked off officially in November, with a total of eight political parties and coalitions fielding candidates. The contest was already in full swing, however, having started in the wake of ARENA's victory in the March 1988 legislative and municipal elections.

ARENA had swept to a landslide, winning the mayoralty of two-thirds of the country's municipalities and all but one of the 14 provincial capitals. The victory was foremost an expression of public dissatisfaction with the Duarte government. However, it was the new, more moderate-sounding ARENA leadership that offered the electorate a viable alternative.

In the 1984 presidential and 1985 legislative elections, a violently anti-Communist ARENA promised military victory over the FMLN and absolute respect for private property. Two straight defeats, however, led to a stiff internal contest over the direction of the party. Moderate businessman Alfredo Cristiani emerged in 1986 as the new party leader, replacing the fiery Roberto d'Aubuisson, a former army major linked to the death squads and the losing presidential candidate in 1984.

Under Cristiani's leadership, in 1988 ARENA successfully campaigned on the issues that polls showed were of major concern to the electorate—government corruption, the economy, and lack of social services. Many outside observers perceived the new approach as solely an effort to placate Washington, to ensure U.S. aid in the event of an ARENA victory in 1989.

However, while acknowledging the relevance of the U.S. angle, experienced Salvadoran observers like Father Ignacio Ellacuria, the rector of the University of Central America, also saw the change in ARENA as a response to the will of the people in a democratic

system. In the view of Ellacuria and others, ARENA's moderation had been the result of a "process." It had evolved over the years from a caudillo-led movement into a political party realistically seeking to widen its political support in order to win elections. ARENA's campaign performance and victory in 1988 were a result of this evolution.

In the wake of its stunning 1988 defeat, the Christian Democratic Party (PDC) was also forced to respond to political reality. A fierce internal battle was waged for the presidential nomination, with Fidel Chavez Mena, a technocrat and former planning minister, finally prevailing over Julio Rey Prendes, a longtime party boss publicly linked to corruption. The determining factor was the intervention of President Duarte who realized how damaging the corruption issue had become. The selection of Jose Francisco Barrientos, an independent businessman and lawyer, as the vice-presidential candidate, showed that the PDC was also aiming to win back some of the private sector vote it had lost almost entirely to ARENA.

But the PDC faced a long road back. After losing the nomination to Chavez Mena, Rey Prendes and his followers broke off from the party. Duarte, who had seen his personal approval rating drop to 25 percent in the polls, was then diagnosed as suffering from terminal liver cancer. And the ARENA campaign, with Cristiani as candidate and "Change to Get Better" as the slogan, was already in full gear and scoring on bread and butter issues.

However, with the official opening of the campaign, Duarte rallied, his cancer temporarily in remission. Salvadorans responded positively when he rediscovered his old form campaigning on Chavez Mena's behalf. His approval rating rose to over 50 percent (*Washington Post*, 10 December 1988).

A November poll of 1,004 people from across the country by the University of Central America (UCA) showed that the PDC had

narrowed the gap, with 26.2 percent for Cristiani and 21.3 percent for Chavez Mena. Guillermo Ungo, the Democratic Convergence candidate came third with 5.9 percent. Approximately 20 percent of those polled were undecided, 8 percent said they didn't know, and 14 percent said they didn't plan to vote. (*Estudios Centroamericanos*, November-December 1988.) While Salvadoran polls should not be considered reliable, among them UCA surveys utilize the most scientific method and do reveal the trends in popular opinion.

The Democratic Convergence's prospects for becoming the third party on the Salvadoran political scene appeared good. The National Conciliation Party (PCN) had come third in 1984, thereby winning one of the three seats on the Central Electoral Council (CCE). But the PCN, once the party of the ruling class and the military, was supported by less than 1 percent of those surveyed in the November poll. The Authentic Christian Movement (MAC), formed by Rey Prendes after the split with the PDC, fared no better. The moderate Authentic Revolutionary Party (PAR), the conservative Popular Union (UP) coalition, and the tiny Democratic Action (AD) party also received less than 1 percent.

As the two-horse race heated up, ARENA continued to score on economic issues. One of its most effective television spots was a simple graphic displaying how the amount of beans that a Salvadoran *colon* buys has dwindled during five years of PDC government. Chavez Mena tried to counter with promises of greater government efficiency and a reduction of the state's role in the economy. But these themes were already staked out by ARENA, and ultimately ineffective against the common perception of PDC corruption and incompetence.

The PDC also tried to paint ARENA as the war party, charging that it would unleash the military on the civilian population in a futile attempt to eradicate the FMLN. Chavez Mena claimed the

PDC was the only party that could negotiate an end to the conflict. But ARENA too was aware that a majority of Salvadorans preferred a negotiated end to the war. While effectively keying on economic and social issues, Cristiani was quick to point out that ARENA's platform did not reject dialogue with the FMLN, that the PDC had already failed in its attempts to negotiate with the guerrillas.

By the beginning of 1989, there were no great differences between the two contenders on the major issues. Both parties were responding to the predominantly moderate aspirations of the Salvadoran people, each trying to garner support beyond its traditional constituency. Since the 1988 campaign, ARENA had been carefully reading the electorate and tailoring its campaign accordingly. The PDC, having lost the initiative, was trying to catch up. With a decidedly more efficient and energetic campaign, however, ARENA maintained a clear edge.

With three months to go the campaign became nasty. Each contender challenged the legitimacy of a possible victory by the other. The PDC charged that ARENA was anti-democratic, that d'Aubuisson was the real power behind a Cristiani figurehead, and would roll back democracy if ARENA won. ARENA countered that it was so far ahead and the government so discredited, the only way the PDC could win was by fraud.

Then, with less than sixty days before the vote, the FMLN made a peace proposal that practically brought the campaign to a halt.

VI. THE FMLN PEACE PROPOSALS

At the core of the FMLN's January 23 proposal was an offer to participate in the electoral process in exchange for an agreement to postpone the election from March 19 to September 15. While demanding a list of other conditions, the FMLN also promised it would declare a five-day truce at the time of the vote in September. Although the guerrillas stated they would respect the results of the election, the proposal did not specify what would happen to their forces after a postponed election, and did not offer any guarantees that they would not resume the armed struggle. The FMLN also hinted strongly that if the proposal were rejected, it would launch a major offensive.

The FMLN's other conditions were 1) extending the franchise to Salvadorans living outside the country, 2) including a Democratic Convergence representative on the Central Electoral Council (CCE), and 3) requiring the armed forces to remain in barracks on election day and have no role in the event.

Initially, the PDC government, most of political parties and the military rejected the initiative, declaring the proposal unconstitutional. The 1983 Constitution requires voting at least 60 days before the expiration of a presidential term; President Duarte's term was due to end June 1.

Only the Democratic Convergence, whose candidates the FMLN said it would support in a postponed election, embraced the proposal. The entire Convergence campaign had centered on finding a solution to the war. It now argued that if all the political parties agreed, the Constitution could be changed. Most of the other players believed that to do so would set a dangerous precedent and undermine the democratic system.

However, no political party was willing to reject the proposal outright, even as the FMLN continued its terror and sabotage attacks. To

appear the spoiler would risk losing support among the war-weary electorate. The proposal had also sparked great international interest; the Duarte government was risking political isolation by shunning the offer. Apparently taking its cue from the Bush administration, the Duarte government agreed to meet with the other political parties and reconsider.

It was finally agreed that representatives of all the parties would meet with the FMLN on February 21 in Oaxtepec, Mexico. At the meeting the FMLN altered its proposal. It called for a negotiated ceasefire, an interim "provisional president" appointed by the legislative assembly, with presidential elections to be held five months after a cessation of hostilities.

For there to be a ceasefire, the FMLN stated the government and the military had to agree to 1) punish all those responsible for past massacres and major political killings attributed to the military and death squads, 2) reduce the 58,000-member armed forces to its 1978 level of about 12,000 troops, and 3) dissolve the national guard, national police and treasury police in favor of a single security force under the command of the Interior Ministry instead of the armed forces.

The talks ended with the political parties agreeing to press for subsequent meetings among the government, legislature, the political parties and the FMLN to discuss the new proposals.

On the day the talks were held in Mexico, the FMLN stepped up its offensive in El Salvador as guerrillas attacked military and civilian targets throughout the country. In one incident, a car-bomb attack on a military headquarters in San Salvador killed two civilians and wounded five others. In separate attacks, guerrillas burned the mayor's office, a gas station and a telephone exchange in the suburb of Apopa.

The escalating FMLN offensive raised questions among all the

players, from the Democratic Convergence to the military, about the sincerity of the guerrillas' peace proposals. FMLN negotiators in Mexico, however, defended the attacks, stating, "Military operations are following their course. The logic of the war continues" (*Washington Post*, 23 February 1989).

On 26 February, the Duarte government countered with an offer to hold talks with the FMLN outside the country, beginning in two days, in exchange for an immediate ceasefire. Duarte also proposed that the 19 March election be postponed until 30 April to allow time for the talks to proceed. He suggested a plebiscite as a way to overcome the constitutional obstacle to postponement. The military supported his proposal by declaring a unilateral ceasefire, meaning that it would cease offensive maneuvers but not return to barracks.

The FMLN responded with a demand that any talks be held in San Salvador, and with a rejection of the military's declared ceasefire. It further required that the government had to agree beforehand to place all the FMLN's demands on a formal agenda.

With only ten days left before the vote, the negotiating commission of the political parties appeared to be seeking a compromise site for talks in Costa Rica. The Democratic Convergence tried to break the apparent stalemate by suggesting all candidates withdraw and agree to postpone the election until July, but the proposal received little support.

Then, a week before election day, the FMLN rejected the government's last offer. It fell back to its long-held position that the electoral process and the government were illegitimate, and called for a national boycott of the vote. It threatened to murder all individuals and institutions involved in the electoral process. It announced that it would enforce an indefinite, nationwide ban on vehicular traffic, or *paro,* beginning three days before the vote, and intensify "insurrectionary actions" throughout the country.

Three days before the vote the official campaign drew to a close. The FMLN was already following through on its threats. In one incident, a teenage girl was killed and two other civilians wounded as guerrillas opened up with assault rifles on a bus in eastern San Vicente province. In contrast, the four-month campaign had been marked by less violence than in previous elections. Despite the heated contest between ARENA and the PDC, only two party activists had died in violence related to the campaign. The Democratic Convergence, despite regular threats from anti-Communist extremists, suffered no casualties.

As the day of the vote approached, one question was how successful the FMLN would be in disrupting the election. But the systematic ferocity of their offensive also raised doubts about whether the FMLN had been planning to disrupt the process all along.

Throughout the flurry of proposals and counter-proposals, FMLN radio had been calling on its guerrilla cadre to prepare for insurrection. Further, an internal FMLN strategy document, captured by the military and dated 30 December 1988, suggested that the FMLN proposals were designed to be rejected and thereby legitimize a long-planned offensive. "Today...we must intensify the military offensive," it said. But at the same time it spoke of "a political formulation of power that must take into consideration the national and international situation and be a totally new formulation" (*Newsweek*, international edition, 20 March 1989).

This internal document was only the latest in a series that have emerged over the decade. These documents, as well as official FMLN publications, are important in understanding the FMLN's behavior, its true intentions and overall strategy. A detailed analysis of FMLN goals and strategy appears in the section of this report that addresses El Salvador's prospects for the future. For despite the FMLN's full-out effort to stop it, the election took place as scheduled.

VII. THE VOTE

The process established by the laws and regulations for the conduct of the election was basically sound. This was the sixth election in El Salvador since 1982 and the experience was evident in the Central Election Council's (CCE) fulfillment of its responsibilities in a generally fair and efficient manner. All of the participating political parties and coalitions were in agreement that the electoral system accommodated their basic needs. The CCE stated it had received the full support and cooperation of the military.

The CCE is an autonomous entity which ultimately has final authority over the electoral process. Its ranks are composed of three commissioners (a president, two vice-presidents and three alternates). These individuals are chosen by the Legislative Assembly from a list of nominees presented by the three political parties which received the highest number of votes in the previous presidential election. The president of the CCE is selected by the party which won the previous presidential election. Thus, the CCE was composed of a PDC president, the vice presidents being from ARENA and the National Conciliation Party (PCN).

At the local level, the process was implemented by a series of five-member voting boards chosen by the CCE. These local boards were composed of representatives of the three political parties from the CCE, one representative from the MAC party (allotted because it held seats in the Legislative Assembly), with the fifth member chosen by vote from the other parties fielding candidates in the race. Finally, each participating party or coalition could designate representatives to "vigilance boards" designed to review the performance of electoral officials at both the local and national level.

The election was governed by an Electoral Code passed in January 1988 that implements the general provisions of the 1983 Constitution concerning elections and voting. The new Code, together

with amendments passed in January 1989, established a registry of eligible voters and a registration card requirement designed to prevent fraud.

Voter registration

In El Salvador the legal voting age is 18. In previous years, out of a total population of approximately 5.1 million, 2.6 million were estimated as being of eligible voting age. However, recent estimates, reflecting the thousands of war casualties and displaced refugees, show the voting age population to be at the 2.1-2.3 million level.

Under the new Electoral Code, all potential voters are required to register with the CCE and subsequently receive a voting card, or *carnet*, that is to be presented at voting tables on election day. To receive the carnet, the applicant has to establish valid identity at local registration offices in the department of residence. Valid identity can be established either by presenting a national identity card, or *cedula*, or by presenting other relevant documents like birth certificates, or by bringing two valid witnesses who can vouch for the voter's identity. If the information is verified by the CCE's central files and the application deemed valid, a *carnet* is issued to the voter.

In previous elections *carnets* were distributed up to the day preceding the elections. But according to the 1989 electoral reforms, and by subsequent political agreement between the political parties and the CCE, *carnets* must be received by eligible voters at least thirty days prior to the vote.

Critics of the reform charged that shortening the time for distribution of *carnets* meant some eligible voters would be excluded from the process. The charge turned out to be valid, but there was no conclusive proof that there was any form of systematic exclusion of portions of the eligible voting population.

Of the estimated voting age population, some 2.08 million applied for *carnets*. However, because of administrative difficulties acknowledged by the CCE, only around 1.87 million applicants received *carnets* by the end of the registration period. That meant that approximately 210,00 applicants (whose actual eligibility had not yet been determined) were unable to receive their *carnets* in time.

PDC supporters blamed ARENA for the delay, charging that once ARENA had determined that its supporters had received *carnets*, it used its presence within the CCE to stall further distribution. CCE president Ricardo Perdomo admitted that irregularities existed before he took the position in November 1988, but that he removed the problem by replacing 300 CCE staff members. He showed how continued delays were the result of having to process large numbers of applications that indicated changes in personal data, thereby lengthening the verification process.

Perdomo stated he was against the reforms limiting the time for *carnet* distribution, but the new law had been established prior to his leadership of the CCE and he was mandated to follow it. He also stated that according to CCE-conducted polls he had ordered during the registration process, all political parties were equally effected by the reform. Nonetheless, he expects that sufficient measures will be taken to remedy delays in registration and *carnet* distribution prior to the legislative and municipal elections scheduled for 1991.

Voting procedure

Salvadoran voters cast their ballots in the municipalities where they resided. There are 262 municipalities in El Salvador. In most municipalities there was only one polling place. However, in the city of San Salvador and some of the larger towns more than one polling place was used.

Within those towns where there were multiple polling places, voters were assigned a polling place based on the first letter of their last name (not the neighborhood where they reside). The locations were announced several days before the election. The announcements were properly posted throughout the country and regularly repeated in the print and electronic media.

Inside the polling places, each voting table, or *mesa*, had 300 ballots and an alphabetical list with the names of the 300 voters assigned to that *mesa*. Before opening the polls, the *mesa* officials, under the eyes of party poll watchers, counted and reviewed the ballots to ensure that 300 unmarked ballots were issued to the *mesa*.

Each *mesa* was manned by up to five officials representing the four parties that currently hold seats in the Legislative Assembly—PDC, ARENA, PCN, MAC—and a fifth member chosen from the other parties participating in the race. When the other parties were able to supply representatives, the fifth member of the *mesa* was selected by lottery from among them. However, since only ARENA and the PDC were able to come up with the more than 6,000 individuals necessary to man the equivalent number of *mesas*, many *mesas* were manned by only three officials.

Before the polls opened, the party representatives at each *mesa* elected from among themselves a president (who takes and reviews the carnet of each voter), a secretary (who checks off the person's name on the voters list), and a third member designated to dip the voter's finger in indelible ink to prevent efforts to vote more than once with false or borrowed documents.

Once the review of the voter and his/her card was completed, the voter was given a ballot with the party symbols of the contenders. The voter was also told that the ballot had to be properly marked to be valid, i.e., only one party symbol could be marked. The voter then proceeded to a private voting booth to mark the ballot. Once

the ballot was marked, the voter folded it and deposited it in a clear plastic bag. Salvadorans prefer the clear plastic bags in order to guarantee that they are empty before the polls open.

In addition to manning the *mesas*, all the political parties were allowed to have watchers, or *vigilantes*, at each polling place and at each individual *mesa*. The *vigilantes* could question the actions of the *mesa* officials during both the voting and the count, and formally submit lingering objections to the CCE. Again, only the PDC and ARENA were able to supply large numbers of people to fill all the *vigilante* positions. However, the smaller parties appeared to have very few problems assuming *vigilante* positions when they managed to have representatives on hand.

Going to the polls

Between the official voting hours of 7 A.M. and 5 P.M., 1,003,155 voters went to the polls to cast ballots in the face of FMLN death threats and a nationwide guerrilla offensive. That number was approximately 54 percent of eligible, *carnet*-holding voters.

In the predawn hours, the FMLN set off bombs in over half the 13 departmental capitals, and more than 20 additional bombs in San Salvador. Guerrilla attacks on the electrical system, which had escalated throughout the preceding week, blacked out San Salvador and left close to 80 percent of the country without power. The FMLN also launched dawn attacks in the suburbs of San Salvador, and on 23 towns in 10 out of 13 regional departments. And it continued to enforce the nationwide ban on roadway travel it had imposed four days earlier. A number of incidents were reported in which vehicles attempting to carry voters to polling places were attacked by FMLN automatic weapon fire.

In the first hours, voting was light. By mid-morning, the fighting subsided as the military successfully repelled the FMLN offen-

sive. Voters began to crowd the polling stations after 9 A.M. By midday, long lines stretched around the block at many stations. Many voters walked as many as two hours to cast ballots, as vehicle drivers were unwilling to risk roadway travel.

FMLN attacks prevented voting in four of the nation's 262 municipalities. No voting had been planned by the CCE in 19 others in northern and northeastern enclaves under guerrilla control. When possible, the CCE arranged for voters residing in those areas to vote in other municipalities if they so desired. In a few other municipalities where electoral officials had resigned because of FMLN death threats, replacements were flown in by military helicopter in time to open the polls.

In the 239 municipalities where voting took place, the polls closed at 5 P.M. and the *mesa* officials began the count. Monitored by party *vigilantes*, the officials examined each ballot to determine whether it had been properly marked. Valid votes for each party were then counted, as were ballots that were improperly marked (null ballots) or left unmarked (blank ballots). Ballots whose validity officials could not agree on were declared "contested."

The results at each *mesa* were then copied onto ledgers, or *actas*. The master was given to CCE polling place officials, with copies available to representatives of all political parties in attendance. CCE officials then brought the *actas* and ballots from each polling place to the departmental CCE offices. From there, the results were relayed by fax to the central CCE office in San Salvador, and the ballots themselves transported for final examination and counting.

The results

The day after the vote, it was clear from unofficial returns issued by the parties, and incomplete official returns issued by the CCE, that ARENA was headed for a first-round victory with over 50 per-

cent of the vote. By the time the official count was completed and the results issued by the CCE on 23 March, Fidel Chavez Mena, the Christian Democratic candidate had already conceded.

The official results released by the CCE were as follows:

Total votes	1,003,155	
Total valid votes	939,078	
ARENA	505,370	(53.82%)
PDC	338,369	(36.03%)
PCN	38,218	(4.07%)
CD	35,642	(3.80%)
MAC	9,300	(0.99%)
UP	4,609	(0.49%)
AD	4,363	(0.46%)
PAR	3,207	(0.34%)
Contested votes	5,484	
Null votes	51,182	
Blank votes	7,409	

VIII. ASSESSMENT OF THE ELECTION AND THE OUTCOME

The election was monitored by 120 foreign observers. Maybe four times that many representatives of the international print and electronic media were also on hand. There were very few reports of irregularities in either the voting or counting process. The scattered incidents that were reported were generally judged to be statistically insignificant.

Those observers who had monitored prior elections in El Salvador found that polling station organization, while adequate in the past, was more efficient. That, combined with increased voter experience, enhanced the technical aspect of the voting process.

There were only scattered reports of the military impeding or interfering in the process; soldiers providing security at the polling stations were visible, often in large numbers, but generally unobtrusive. The Ministry of Defense underscored its neutrality in the process by announcing that less than one in five soldiers would be voting. The armed forces have the right to vote, but most were assigned to duty during election week and therefore away from their place of residence.

The four-day delay in releasing the official results caused some consternation among the political parties, particularly the Democratic Convergence (CD). The CD initially charged that the delay was a cover for fraud that deprived Guillermo Ungo of third place in the race. It alleged that in certain departments CD-marked ballots had not been counted. However, no evidence of this type of fraud emerged and the charge was superseded by Ungo's acknowledgement that the CD had been "badly damaged" by the FMLN offensive against the electoral process (ACAN-EFE, 20 March 1989).

The legitimacy of the election

In the weeks before the vote, CD leaders tried to persuade their FMLN allies to stop guerrilla attacks, rescind the death threats against electoral officials and call off the traffic ban, the *paro*, at least on election day. But they received contradictory responses to their public and private entreaties, and in practice were ultimately ignored.

While FMLN spokesmen in Mexico announced that guerrillas would attack only military targets on election day, FMLN Radio Venceremos in El Salvador continued making threats against the electoral system and calling for a boycott of the vote. As they had been for months, FMLN field commanders distributed rifles to civilian supporters, summoning them to national insurrection (*Washington Post*, 14 March 1989).

At the same time, FMLN death threats continued, causing the resignation of a number of electoral officials during the week of the election. These threats resonated throughout the population; on election day many voters were observed trying to rub the indelible ink off their thumbs, afraid that the FMLN would know they had voted.

In the days before the vote, the FMLN stepped up its enforcement of the *paro*, threatening to "blow to pieces or consume with flames" any vehicle that ventured out, and carrying out its threat on those that tried (*Washington Post*, 17 March 1989). It also increased its urban guerrilla attacks. At his final campaign rally in San Salvador, Ungo urged people to vote despite the FMLN's call to boycott. But the rally was cut short and he was rushed from the site in an armored vehicle when insurgents attacked a nearby military barracks, wounding one soldier and seven civilians.

After the election, Ungo vehemently disagreed with the FMLN's logic in declaring its boycott a success. The FMLN argued that the total of abstentions, voided ballots, and votes for the CD demon-

strated wide support for the FMLN and proved that ARENA's victory, and the process itself, was illegitimate. Ungo countered that the guerrillas could not "suck from three teats" at the same time, that their violent tactics "could only lead to a strong abstention which no one can claim as his own" (*Latin American Weekly Report*, 30 March 1989). Coming from an ally, such sharp criticism was particularly damning and reinforced the FMLN's political isolation both at home and abroad.

In El Salvador, the FMLN's actions were criticized or condemned by every social, religious and political institution in the country with the exception of its own front groups.

In the international arena, the FMLN's logic regarding the turnout and the legitimacy of the election was accepted by no one except its Marxist-Leninist allies in the region and the East bloc. President Carlos Andres Perez of Venezuela, the acknowledged leader of the Group of Eight Contadora countries, stated that ARENA's victory was the result of a democratic process, that "our obligation is to recognize the regime that has resulted from the election" (EFE, 31 March 1989).

The FMLN's attack on the electoral process was roundly condemned. Both before and on the day of the vote, President Oscar Arias of Costa Rica, the author of the Esquipulas II accord, and Joao Baena Soares, the secretary general of the 31-member Organization of American States (OAS), condemned the FMLN's offensive (Reuters, 16 March 1989; AP, 19 March 1989). Spain, whose social democratic government has been a leader of the European Community's (EC) Central American peace and democracy initiatives, had requested that the FMLN abstain from violence, but was rebuffed (EFE, 14 March 1989; AFP, 16 March 1989).

Arias stated that "the time has come to denounce those who claim to embrace the cause of peace and democracy but, in the hour of

truth, unleash terror and hostility against those who only want to exercise their rights." He added, that "to prevent the people from voting, that is the most evil of crimes, a crime against sovereignty." (ACAN-EFE, 16 March 1989).

After the election, Arias called on the FMLN to lay down their arms immediately if they were serious about dialogue (UPI, 28 March 1989). In effect, he was supporting the long-standing position of the Duarte administration, as well as the stated position of President-elect Cristiani. Arias also rejected FMLN denials that it receives arms from abroad, and criticized Cuba for continuing to provide support to the FMLN, saying, "the arms that the FMLN receives do not fall from the sky" (UPI, 5 April 1989).

The statements by Arias and others reflected a Western consensus. The FMLN's peace proposals had been promising, but the fact that no agreement had been reached did not justify the FMLN's assault on a legitimate electoral enterprise. While the turnout might have been considered low by Salvadoran standards, the fact that 54 percent of eligible voters did turn out, in the face of the FMLN attacks and intimidation, reflected the continued determination of the Salvadoran people to seek peaceful and democratic solutions to their problems. For the sixth time since 1982, the FMLN had tried to undermine the legitimacy of the Salvadoran democratic process, and for the sixth time, in the eyes of democratic peoples, it had undermined its own.

The ARENA victory

Prior to the vote, many Salvadoran analysts believed a low turnout would work to ARENA's advantage. In his criticism of the FMLN following the election, Guillermo Ungo stated that guerrilla actions had "given the victory to ARENA in the first round" (ACAN-EFE, 20 March 1989). And to an extent, the lower turnout did help ARENA,

because it was the best organized party among the two contenders, and more effective in getting its people to the polls. But there were other and more significant factors in Cristiani's decisive first-round victory.

As discussed in an earlier section of this report, ARENA outclassed the incumbent Christian Democrats (PDC) in the campaign. Cristiani ran strong on bread and butter issues, effectively sounding the theme of economic opportunity, while scoring heavily against the PDC on the corruption issue. He also blunted PDC criticism on the war issue by agreeing on the need for dialogue with the FMLN. Cristiani delivered the message at rallies and in the media in a crisp, coherent fashion. Meanwhile, Roberto d'Aubuisson reinforced the enthusiasm of ARENA's old guard and core constituency with hard-line stump speeches.

In contrast, Chavez Mena's campaign lacked energy and direction. From the beginning, the PDC was playing catch-up on the issues, and never overcame the corruption and incompetence factor. Since its founding in the early 1960s, the PDC had billed itself as the anti-corruption party. Many former supporters had become disillusioned when the PDC succumbed to the greed it had railed against for so long.

Chavez Mena, an inexperienced and lackluster campaigner, never formulated an effective theme and was unable to generate enthusiasm even among the PDC's traditional constituency. Chavez Mena appeared to confuse voters by first distancing himself from, then identifying with Duarte. The result was a major reduction in the PDC's power base in San Salvador and other urban areas.

Despite the reduced overall turnout, voting in urban centers was more than 70 percent (*Washington Post,* 21 March 1989). It was lowest in rural areas, a traditional ARENA stronghold. The fact that ARENA won the election so decisively, outrunning the PDC by near-

ly 3 to 2 in San Salvador alone, effectively disputes contentions that low turnout was the dominant cause of ARENA's first-round victory. ARENA's striking success in San Salvador was actually foreshadowed the year before when Armando Calderon Sol won the mayoral race against President Duarte's son. ARENA has clearly broadened its social base beyond its traditional constituency.

A second major factor in the outcome was the weakened state of the PDC's party organization following the party split in mid-1988. The PDC hoped the departure of Julio Rey Prendes, frequently identified with party corruption, would help Chavez Mena. But Rey Prendes, a traditional party boss, took a significant chunk of the PDC party machine with him, a machine that motivated the rank-and-file and brought them out to the polls in 1984. The PDC's trade union supporters made a valiant effort to fill the vacuum, but their ability to mobilize PDC voters was limited. On election day, mid-level PDC officials and organizers appeared demoralized even before the voting started.

As it turned out, the FMLN peace proposals, having dominated the campaign during the final two months, had little effect on the outcome of the election. While the Salvadoran electorate clearly desires an end to the war, there was no surge of support for Guillermo Ungo, either in the polls or on election day, even though the CD was the only party in the race calling for the proposals to be accepted.

The final UCA poll, taken after the proposals were made, actually showed a dip in CD support from the previous survey in November, from 5.9 to 4.2 percent (*New York Times*, 19 March 1989). That latter figure was within half a point of the CD's actual percentage (3.8) of the vote in the election. And while the gap between ARENA and the PDC appeared to be widening, there were no major fluctuations in voter opinion.

The voters had early on made their concerns known on three major issues. They wanted an end to corruption, an end to economic distress, as well as an end to the war. After more than five years of PDC government, voters wanted to hear about fresh ideas. The PDC was unable to convince them it had any. ARENA, in turn, addressed each issue with clearly defined proposals and, combined with a more moderate leadership, offered a viable alternative. Undeterred by FMLN threats and widespread violence, a million Salvadorans turned out to vote. A majority of them voted for change, giving Cristiani and ARENA a strong mandate to bring it about.

IX. OUTLOOK FOR DEMOCRACY

ARENA won control of the legislature and a majority of the municipalities in 1988. With Cristiani winning the presidency in 1989, the party appeared to be in a strong position to carry out its program. Both in El Salvador and Washington, however, Cristiani will be judged by the set of standards he personally established during the campaign and in meetings with the Freedom House delegation and other international observers.

Cristiani vowed that his government would strengthen democracy and increase respect for human rights. Recognizing the role of opposition in a democracy, he said he would work to guarantee and expand the new political space that has opened in recent years. Regarding human rights, he pledged to seek reform of those institutions, particularly the judiciary, needed to establish a respected rule of law. He said that labor and trade union rights would be fully respected. He also said his government would cooperate fully with the private and international organizations working in El Salvador, like the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR).

Regarding the armed forces, Cristiani stated he would seek a more effective, professional use of military resources, not an intensification of the war. He said that he would seek a political, not a military solution to the conflict. He was willing to dialogue with the FMLN, but with the goal of integrating the guerrillas into the democratic system, not negotiating power.

On economic issues, Cristiani said his goal was to reduce the state's control over the banking system, and dismantle the state monopoly on the export of coffee, the nation's leading cash crop, and other agricultural output. Laws would be changed to allow once again for chartering of private banks. On land reform, he said the law

would be altered to break up bankrupt farming cooperatives by giving their members title to individual plots of land. He said the goal was to make the struggling land reform program more efficient and financially viable, not dismantle it. Cristiani also said the overall economic program was not designed to open the way for renewed concentration of property in the hands of the wealthy, but to make more efficient use of U.S. aid, generate domestic growth, and remove corruption. That would lead to better social programs. He said he was not against the goals of the PDC's social programs, but the fact that they were inefficient. He said ARENA was already planning longterm programs in the fields of health and access to water.

Cristiani has set high standards for himself and his government. He has undertaken to address enormous challenges. The prospect would be daunting for any president-elect. If he is to carry out his program, however, he must first address the internal dynamics of his party.

The ARENA question

Serious questions about ARENA remain, particularly regarding the role of party hardliners led by former army officers d'Aubuisson and Ochoa. Few in El Salvador doubt President-elect Cristiani's honesty and integrity, but throughout the campaign he had to address the question of ARENA's two faces: Who runs the party, he or d'Aubuisson? Cristiani's election did not still the debate, either in El Salvador or Washington, but the legitimacy of his victory won him the benefit of the doubt, at least for the moment.

The answer to the ARENA question may begin to emerge as Cristiani prepares to assume office on 1 June. But it will emerge only slowly, and without clear resolution for some time. And because it is likely that the debate will have to be first resolved within the party itself, the resolution may not be simple or immediately clear.

As noted in an earlier section of this report, astute Salvadoran observers like Father Ellacuria perceive ARENA as an organization "in process." Founded by d'Aubuisson in 1981, it remained a caudillo-led political movement until 1985. Following successive electoral losses to the PDC in 1984 and 1985, however, formerly passive representatives of the private sector and the growing middle classes sought to change ARENA into a more viable electoral contender. They wanted to be able to defend their interests against the PDC's statist economic policies. In the new democratic system, they understood that acquiring the necessary political clout meant winning elections, and that meant moderating the party's program.

When Cristiani emerged as the new party leader, it was alleged that d'Aubuisson had merely stepped behind the scenes for tactical reasons, waiting to emerge as the power behind the throne after ARENA won the presidency. If that indeed was his intention, as well as that of his oligarchical backers who helped found the organization, attempting the maneuver could be difficult.

According to Cristiani, since 1986 ARENA's internal decision-making process has been broadened, strengthening the influence of the newly active and more moderate members. He points to an expanded executive committee that now includes the fourteen provincial party directors; representatives of seven social and economic sectors—women, labor, youth, peasants, professionals, business, and agriculture; and members of the legislative assembly. The party platforms in 1988 and 1989 had to be approved by all members of the committee. The selection of candidates began with municipal and provincial conventions, leading to a national convention with 736 voting representatives.

These are the mechanisms of a modern, democratic political party. Cristiani contends that through them he won a solid organizational mandate to lead ARENA, a mandate that cannot be quickly over-

turned by one or two individuals. A number of Salvadoran analysts agree, but they admit, as does Cristiani, that because the internal decision-making process is democratic, all elements of ARENA will retain a voice.

Therefore, if d'Aubuisson and/or Ochoa plan to spring a hidden agenda on Cristiani, it would be a question of competing power bases within the party. In such a clash, d'Aubuisson could draw on the support of still powerful remnants of the old oligarchy, as well as the original party machine that was much in evidence during the presidential campaign. Some analysts contend that d'Aubuisson was, and still is, an instrument of old money that wants not only to change the economic setting, but to roll back democracy entirely. And within this axis, they say, lurks the death squad network, relatively intact.

In turn, Cristiani has derived added strength by winning the election. His mandate within the party has been reinforced and has now become the mandate of the people. Because the Salvadoran Constitution endows the executive office with substantial power, the government will become a power base. During the campaign Cristiani repeatedly said that cabinet choices will be his. He stated that neither d'Aubuisson nor Ochoa would receive appointments, that their role would remain as ARENA representatives in the Legislative Assembly.

Assuming Cristiani does establish a powerful government base, and further that d'Aubuisson and friends continue to play by the rules, the competition may be played out in the assembly where ARENA holds 32 of 60 seats. D'Aubuisson has developed a base of support there, but in the last twelve months it has been apparent that he does not control the entire ARENA bloc; he will not be able to wield veto power against a Cristiani government. There has also been competition between d'Aubuisson and Ochoa, meaning that unity among hardliners is not certain.

A preview of the intra-party competition will come with the battle for party president, which Cristiani has said he will give up when he assumes office. A major contender is Armando Calderon Sol, the popular mayor of San Salvador usually identified with the Cristiani wing of the party. His candidacy will test the organizational strength of the moderates in the party. Cristiani originally considered Calderon Sol for his running mate, but reportedly agreed to "Chico" Merino under pressure from d'Aubuisson. While this may be true, the vice president in El Salvador wields little power as long as the president is healthy. Meanwhile, Calderon Sol is free to contend for the more important position of party president. [NOTE: On 24 April, ARENA named Calderon Sol as the new party president.]

The intra-party dynamic actually began within weeks of the election. It took place on a controversial issue involving the judiciary, and Cristiani prevailed. In the first week of April, a district judge threw out a long-standing case against eight military officers and civilians, all d'Aubuisson associates, charged with kidnapping wealthy businessmen. But Cristiani acted quickly and decisively, securing the support of the defense ministry and leaning on the right-dominated Supreme Court. The ruling was overturned and the arrest orders and warrants were reinstated.

A further measure of Cristiani's strength within ARENA will be evident in the selection of a new Supreme Court. The five-year terms of the judges end June 1. New judges are selected by the legislative assembly. Since 1984, d'Aubuisson and company have enjoyed the luxury of having friends on the Court. Because it is the Supreme Court that appoints lower court judges, the entire judiciary has been undermined. Cristiani has stated that judiciary reform is an important element on his agenda. He appeared to have the upper hand over d'Aubuisson in his action on the kidnapping case. But bringing honest, independent judges to the Supreme Court, the key

to establishing a credible rule of law, means wielding sufficient party strength to mobilize ARENA legislators.

Cabinet selections

At the same time, Cristiani's cabinet selections will be closely watched. He has said that he will choose on the basis of professionalism, not politics, and will reach beyond ARENA if necessary to find the most qualified people. If he follows through, it raises the question of whether d'Aubuisson and friends will remain content with their positions in the legislature. It also raises the question of how they will react if they are not, or when there is a falling out over government policy.

One course available to d'Aubuisson and company is to seek legislative alliances with other parties in order to make governing difficult for Cristiani. When MAC broke off from the PDC in 1988, it took seventeen seats with it. MAC is top-heavy with political operators and opportunists. Its dismal showing in the election showed it has no social base; it may be looking for a deal. The idea of ARENA hardliners cutting deals outside the party raises the possibility of a split in the party.

Violence is another course available to the hardliners. If employed, it also could lead to a split in the party. It would not necessarily be directed at Cristiani, but used as a lever to influence his policy decisions. All are aware that increased death squad activity threatens continued U.S. aid. Cristiani knows that aid must be maintained. The hardliners, all staunch nationalists, agree only reluctantly, detesting the strings attached to it. If in their view Cristiani becomes subservient to Washington, and if they do not have the political power to engage him, they may resort to paramilitary activity to undermine him.

It is doubtful that Cristiani would tolerate such tactics, but uncer-

tain how he would confront them. If such a clash resulted in ARENA splitting, Cristiani would have to seek allies elsewhere to contain the violence. He may have to anyway, especially if renegade death squad elements and defiant junior officers are urged by oligarchical remnants to act.

In the April kidnapping case, in which most of the suspects charged with kidnapping have also been implicated in death squad activity, Cristiani sought and secured key support from Defense Minister Vides Casanova. Retaining Vides, if he wants to continue, or finding a worthy replacement if he does not, is Cristiani's most crucial cabinet decision, assuming he will be able to make it on his on. His choice will be important not only in terms of shoring up his own political power base, but also in the conduct of the war.

The military

Under Gen. Vides Casanova, the armed forces not only grew to a combined force of 57,000, but also made significant strides in the areas of professional conduct and, as noted in an earlier section of this report, respect for human rights. Nonetheless, as Vides admits, there is still much improvement that needs to be made in both areas, and a number of obstacles to overcome.

In 1988, a new group of officers assumed command of the Army's combat units. They are called the *tandona*, or big class, having been the largest group to graduate from the military academy. They are led by Army Chief of Staff Rene Emilio Ponce. Some analysts believed that this new group would become more aggressive and less concerned for human rights. Thus far that has not happened.

Ponce has stated that he will continue to follow the rules of low-intensity engagement set down by U.S. advisors. Even so, it is known that many of his fellow army officers want to fight a faster, more aggressive war. They have been constrained by the moderating influ-

ence of Vides and the high degree of control exerted over the conduct of the war by the U.S.

However, their desire to accelerate the pace of the war has been supported by former officers in ARENA, especially Sigifredo Ochoa, and the current air force commander, Gen. Juan Rafael Bustillo. Unlike Vides, Bustillo is a hardliner with few political skills, and his troops appear less concerned about human rights. Ochoa and other former officers in ARENA reportedly support Bustillo for defense minister.

Cristiani, on the other hand, has said he wants a more efficient military and increased respect for human rights, not an intensification of the war. He has also said he wants to guarantee the new political space and expand it further. Finally, if there is to be dialogue with the guerrillas, there must be support from the military. For all of that, he needs the cooperation and confidence of the minister of defense. Considering the apparent pressure from within his own party, and the importance of the post, it was no wonder Cristiani was taking his time in making a decision.

The new minister of defense will also have to confront institutional problems. The younger generation of officers below the *tandona* are reportedly resentful that their seniors have monopolized perquisites and avoided combat since taking command of the army last year. Given the ongoing corruption in the military, which the new defense minister will have to address, there is probably some truth to the allegation. True or not, morale and discipline among junior officers has reportedly dipped. Their resentment undermines the high command's ability to conduct the war, and probably is related to the recent, if sporadic, violations of human rights by soldiers.

Vides has expressed a desire to retire, but has hinted privately that he may stay on if he were asked, and if he thought he were needed. It is not known if he has suggestions for a successor. Whoever fills the position, however, will face the continuing challenge

of effectively containing FMLN terror and sabotage, without interfering in or impeding the democratic process the military is constitutionally bound to protect.

Institutionalizing a multi-party system

For the first time in El Salvador's history one democratically elected government is preparing to give way to another. The question is how soon the PDC will be able to regroup after its defeat and assume a counter-weight role in the opposition. Cristiani himself points out that the PDC is still a political force, having garnered over a third of the votes. He gives the PDC credit for helping to strengthen the democratic process during its five-year rule, and says that he hopes to be able to cooperate with the PDC during his administration. But the PDC has significant obstacles to overcome.

First is the question of party leadership. In mid-April, Duarte continued to gallantly battle terminal cancer. There seemed to be a good possibility that he would live long enough to hand over the presidential sash to Cristiani on 1 June. But the vacuum in the PDC leadership was already evident. Chavez Mena was expected to rebound, but the longterm challenge of rebuilding the party through a new generation of leaders remained.

In the short term, the PDC is hobbled by limited representation in the Legislative Assembly. When Julio Rey Prendes broke away in 1988 to form the Authentic Christian Movement (MAC), he took seventeen seats with him, leaving the PDC with only five, the smallest presence in the body. The PCN holds six. The PDC needs to begin preparing now for the next legislative elections scheduled for 1991.

In the meantime, MAC, with seventeen seats yet no party base, remains a wild card in the opposition.

Finally, the future of the Democratic Convergence (CD) must be

considered. After the return in late 1987 of Guillermo Ungo and Ruben Zamora, the two main CD leaders, the alliance appeared to reestablish a place for the left in El Salvador's political spectrum. Both men had been marked for death by the right when they went into exile in 1980; their return was hardly imaginable even three years ago.

Throughout the campaign, the CD seemed on the verge of capturing the key third position. But in the end, the CD was edged out by the PCN by less than 3,000 votes, denying it a seat on the Central Electoral Council (CCE). Having passed up the 1988 legislative and municipal elections, the CD will therefore be without a formal channel into Salvadoran politics at least until the 1991 legislative elections.

After initially alleging that third place had been denied them through fraud, CD leaders acknowledged that the failure was a result of the FMLN offensive against the election, and their continued alliance with the guerrilla organization. With few resources to assist supporters in getting to the polls, the CD was hurt by the FMLN-imposed *paro*. But Ungo also admitted that he was unable to distinguish his campaign for peaceful change from the armed actions of the FMLN, that in the end most voters had rejected him as a rebel front man.

Colleagues of the CD leaders said that the FMLN had misled their allies during the campaign. In early meetings, the FMLN had endorsed the CD effort, then denied the CD the support of FMLN front groups. In later meetings, the guerrillas had made assurances that the elections wouldn't be disrupted, then unleashed their offensive.

After the election, it was apparent to the CD that the FMLN's real objective had been to drive down the turnout to help defeat the Christian Democrats (*New York Times*, 25 March 1989). In fact, Joaquin Villalobos, first among equals in the FMLN high command,

had stated previously that the FMLN preferred an ARENA victory because it would re-polarize the country and snap the American Congressional consensus on U.S. aid to the government (*Washington Post,* 21 March 1989).

In the end, the CD was left in limbo, suspended between an armed ally that had used it as a pawn and a political system in which it has no real presence or power. Ungo, for one, seemed to be reconsidering the CD's alliance with the FMLN. A week after the election, he said the "order of the day" was to seek new alliances in order to become stronger and more independent from the FMLN (*Christian Science Monitor*, 27 March 1989).

The real question is whether the CD will formally break its alliance with the guerrillas. Throughout the campaign, the CD argued that the alliance was a necessary bridge if the CD was to help bring about a negotiated solution to the war, the main plank of the party's platform. But now, like his social democratic allies Oscar Arias and Carlos Andres Perez, and every other democratic leader in the region, Ungo must be questioning whether the FMLN really wants a negotiated solution.

However, to break the alliance would risk the wrath of the FMLN. Many former allies and members who have broken with the guerrillas have been declared traitors and murdered. The FMLN has also displayed the capability to kill and make it look like the work of the death squads. If the FMLN is indeed seeking to repolarize the country, an apparent death-squad killing of either Ungo or Zamora would be very effective. So, while the CD's political chances in El Salvador remain slim while the alliance is maintained, its leaders cannot be faulted if they hesitate to break it.

Meanwhile, the FMLN was continuing its two-track strategy. While issuing yet another proposal in Washington, the guerrillas were simultaneously bombing ARENA-owned property in El Salvador and,

apparently, the San Salvador home of Vice President-elect Merino. In mid-April, Attorney General Roberto Garcia, a member of ARENA, was assassinated after being the target of verbal attacks on FMLN radio. The proposal, released in Washington to coincide with Cristiani's visit, called on Cristiani to declare his government "transitional," agree to negotiate the demands made in its earlier proposals, and hold new elections in six months. Cristiani reiterated his position that he was willing to negotiate the integration of the FMLN into the democratic system, but not to negotiate power.

The simultaneous attacks against ARENA people and property raises again the question of the FMLN's real agenda. In the final section of this report, the FMLN will be examined in depth.

X. GUERRILLA STRATEGY: THE FMLN'S REAL INTENTIONS

"Sudden turnaround" and "abrupt reversal" were phrases most often used to describe the FMLN's peace proposals. Many observers emphasized that the guerrillas were no longer demanding a share of power. Many said the offer to participate in elections meant the FMLN had finally agreed to recognize the democratic system it's been trying to overthrow.

But a closer examination of internal FMLN documents, and the group's actual behavior while proposing peace, reveals that the FMLN's objective has not changed; it has merely made a strategic adjustment. Secondly, a closer inspection of the organization itself reveals totalitarian methods of internal control that make the Marxist-Leninist FMLN a highly unlikely participant in a democratic system. After a decade of war, there is a natural desire to pursue any avenue for peace, but there is strong evidence that the FMLN proposals should be approached with extreme caution.

Since 1980, the FMLN has followed a clear pattern. It has consistently 1) over-calculated its strength, both militarily and politically, then 2) bought time to recover from reversals with peace proposals aimed at both domestic and international audiences. The FMLN's failure to foment insurrection in 1988, followed by peace proposals in 1989, appeared to fit the pattern.

But the timing of these proposals during an electoral campaign, with a simultaneous increase in the use of violent tactics, signals the offensive nature of the initiative. The FMLN is not simply trying to buy time. It is seeking in 1989 to coordinate effectively, for the first time, armed action with political deception. The immediate objective is to disrupt the democratic system, cause it to collapse. The endgame is a cutoff of aid from the United States, the

only thing that will alter the balance of forces in the FMLN's favor. That is what FMLN commander Joaquin Villalobos really meant when he wrote, "The problem to be solved is the interference of the United States. Everything else is open to discussion" (*Foreign Policy,* Spring 1989).

The FMLN's first miscalculation was evident in the failed "final offensive" of January 1981. Regrouping in Havana a month later, FMLN strategists mapped out a plan to "improve our internal military situation" by engaging in "negotiating maneuvers" designed to win time (*Freedom at Issue,* September-October, 1983). The FMLN document produced at this meeting, entitled "The Negotiations Maneuver," also included a plan for a diplomatic offensive to establish the organization's international standing.

Subsequent offensives in 1982 and 1983 showed that the guerrillas had recovered a significant degree of military capability. However, predicting victory by 1984 was their next miscalculation. Their diplomatic offensive and negotiating maneuvers had helped undermine support for the Salvadoran government in Washington, but a bipartisan Congressional majority remained in favor of continued U.S. aid. U.S. aid led to a stronger, more professional army, and military reversals for the guerrillas. FMLN efforts to disrupt the 1984 elections came up short. Guerrilla ranks diminished as fighters left the war to try out the democratic system. And the inauguration of President Duarte, a lifelong foe of military government, undermined their claim to legitimacy both at home and abroad.

The FMLN was therefore quick to accept Duarte's invitation to negotiate in late 1984. But after two meetings, they rejected his offer to disarm and compete within the democratic system, instead repeating their power-sharing demand. But despite disappointment over the failure of the talks, it was clear that few democratic nations were still willing to support power-sharing.

Attacking the democratic system

Having lost the battle for popular support to the democratic system, the FMLN in 1985 set out to destroy the system. Because of its weakened military position, however, it was forced to resort to terror and sabotage. If it had not, it would have ceased to exist as a political entity.

The FMLN began with an attack on the presidency itself. The damage to the Christian Democratic government, and to Duarte personally, by the kidnapping of his daughter in the fall of 1985 cannot be overestimated. The FMLN declared it "our biggest victory so far." Such reveling in what many in the wider world saw as a grotesque act of terrorism showed how marginalized the guerrillas had become. But if they underestimated the political effects of this on themselves, they were right about the impact it had on the Duarte government.

The drawnout ordeal paralyzed the government. In its wake, Duarte appeared to abdicate leadership to party functionaries. The government lost direction, and electoral promises on social and economic issues were overrun by corruption and infighting. The FMLN opportunely turned to sabotaging the nation's economic infrastructure. The objective was to further undermine the government's ability to meet the needs of the people. The total cost of FMLN sabotage by early 1989 was estimated at $1.9 billion. Total U.S. economic aid to El Salvador this decade has been approximately $2.4 billion.

It should be noted that a sustained international outcry forced the Contras to reconsider the use of similar tactics in Nicaragua. However, there has been little international criticism of the FMLN. In fact, many observers cite FMLN sabotage as evidence of its strength, not its weakness, and therefore as a reason why the FMLN should be respected. Few point out that the primary victims are the workers and peasants the FMLN claims to represent.

By 1987, the FMLN had taken advantage of the openings created by Esquipulas II and mounting economic discontent to penetrate democratic labor movements, and to rebuild front groups as a cover for urban commando units. With renewed terror and sabotage capability in the cities, FMLN strategists determined in early 1988 that the country was ripe for insurrection. But again they miscalculated.

The "Strategic Appraisal" document

The new insurrectional strategy was mapped out in an internal document of the FMLN General Command, dated January 1988 and titled "Strategic Appraisal." The document was captured by the military a month later and subsequently published in the April 1988 issue of *Analisis,* the journal of the New University of San Salvador. It has been acknowledged as authentic by the FMLN.

The document provides evidence that the FMLN had again drifted into its characteristic overconfidence. Its leaders imagined that the Salvadoran people had become so disillusioned with democracy that FMLN "armed propaganda," by provoking increased government repression, would "detonate a social explosion" leading to insurrection. But the scenario didn't pan out; the military and the Salvadoran people refused to assume their projected roles, even during a heated electoral campaign.

The night before the March 1988 elections, the FMLN set off six bombs in San Salvador. On election day, they enforced a nationwide traffic shutdown, cut off power to 80 percent of the country by blowing up electrical towers, and declared all polling stations military targets. But while the percentage of eligible voters declined in comparison to the 1985 legislative elections, the total number of voters in 1988 actually increased (*Estudios Centroamericanos*, San Salvador, March-April 1988).

During the remaining nine months of 1988, the FMLN initiated

a series of military offensives and called for "the masses" to join the "popular rebellion." By the end of the year it was apparent there would be no insurrection. A poll taken by the University of Central America (UCA) showed that nearly 9 out of 10 Salvadorans surveyed were planning to vote in 1989 (*Estudios Centroamericanos*, November-December 1988). The UCA rector, Father Ignacio Ellacuria, a man of the left and the former philosophy professor of many FMLN commanders, stated that insurrection was impossible, that Salvadorans would continue voting as they had in the five previous elections since 1982.

The FMLN fared no better internationally. Guerrilla commanders donned suits in the fall and toured the capitals of Latin America and Western Europe in search of support. They were told without exception to forget the military path, and to negotiate.

There were also questions about the enthusiasm of Moscow, Havana and Managua for the FMLN's insurrectionary strategy. Concrete support from these allies was reduced in mid-decade when preserving Sandinista power in Nicaragua became the Marxist-Leninist priority in the region. In 1988, Moscow appeared hesitant to undermine the new detente with Washington, and unwilling to subsidize another Third World Marxist regime. But Cuba remained a wild card. Fidel Castro had united El Salvador's fragmented radical left to form the FMLN in Havana in 1980, and remained their staunchest supporter. While at odds with Moscow on numerous issues, and always fearful that detente will lead Moscow and Washington to cut a deal over his head, Castro could view insurrection in El Salvador as the perfect opportunity to poke both superpowers in the eye.

Given the FMLN's political isolation both at home and abroad, its strategic adjustment at the beginning of 1989 should not have been surprising. The 1988 "Strategic Appraisal" document, in fact,

clearly describes the type of adjustment held ready by the FMLN in case the insurrectionary strategy failed.

After assessing what it believed to be the conditions for insurrection in 1988, the FMLN noted that the resurgence of ARENA and the weakened state of the government were placing increasing stress on the entire political system. The stress was greatest during electoral campaigns. It also noted that past FMLN peace proposals, designed to buy time, had also "delivered shocks" to the political system, exacerbating friction between the military, the government and the political parties.

Arsenal of proposals

In 1988, the FMLN determined that insurrection would provide the decisive blow to the strained cohesion of the system. Its "Strategic Appraisal" document stated, however, in a preview of its 1989 initiative, that if the insurrection were slow to advance, the FMLN would unleash "our arsenal of proposals." The FMLN said these proposals, linked to dialogue, are primary instruments of "our conspiratorial capability." While they can be used to "keep the enemy tied to the table," in the future they would be used "offensively...to break the enemy's cohesion and bring down the government."

The recent FMLN peace proposals therefore do not appear to constitute a genuinely conciliatory offer to participate in elections. Coordinated with increased terror and sabotage, they seem more likely to be the centerpiece of a combined political and military assault on the democratic system itself.

In particular, the assault is designed to provoke an overreaction from the military and the antidemocratic right. At the end of February, Democratic Convergence leader Guillermo Ungo acknowledged that the FMLN did not expect their proposals to be accepted, that the initiative was actually meant to "corner and isolate the Army"

(*New York Times*, 26 February 1989). By that time, it was apparent the proposals were having the desired effect; the military leadership was unsettled and practically promising a coup if the government agreed to postpone the elections in an unconstitutional manner.

A coup may very well be just what the FMLN has been trying to provoke. The collapse of the democratic system would mean an end to U.S. assistance, and a reversal of the FMLN's political isolation, both domestically and abroad. The history of Latin American revolution shows that left-wing insurgencies have great difficulty in overthrowing democracies, even relatively weak ones. The condition for success is to face off against an authoritarian regime, as in Cuba in 1959 and Nicaragua in 1979. In 1988, the FMLN apparently realized that it could not overthrow the Salvadoran democracy. In 1989, it therefore turned to strategic political manipulation, in tandem with the tactical use of violence, "to bring the government down." If democracy is brought down, the FMLN can then consider a number of options for seizing power, including insurrection.

By March, the FMLN proposals had succeeded in shaking the political system. The war/peace issue commanded the spotlight. Accumulated tension and war-weariness in Salvadoran society were brought into sharper relief. The political parties, knowing that Salvadorans are hungry for peace as well social and economic improvements, strained to avoid being stigmatized as spoilers. The military leadership struggled to keep the armed forces from overreacting, even declaring a unilateral ceasefire in support of President Duarte's counterproposal to delay elections for six weeks instead of six months.

At the same time, the FMLN turned up the pressure through escalated terror and sabotage. The guerrillas blew up electrical towers on a daily basis, blacking out wide areas of the countryside and the capi-

tal. Terrorist attacks were launched at the military and right-wing politicians. A series of car bombs directed at urban military installations were clearly designed to provoke the army; yet the only deaths and injuries were suffered by civilians in the vicinity. Bomb attacks were made against the homes of Air Force officers, and one bomb was thrown at the house of Gen. Vides Casanova's mother, an obvious attempt to provoke the defense minister who has been a moderating force within the military. All this took place *after* the FMLN offered its peace proposals.

Provoking violent backlash is familiar FMLN procedure. It was used as a tactic to promote insurrection in 1981 and 1988, and was being used in 1989 to sharpen the divisions in the political system brought on by their peace proposals and a hotly contested election. By April 1989, however, the backlash expected by the FMLN had been minimal, coming primarily from remnants of the old death-squad networks, and recalcitrant junior military officers.

The FMLN's view of the U.S.

The combined political-military assault on El Salvador's democracy that began in January appeared to catch Washington off guard. If the FMLN's endgame is a cutoff of U.S. aid, as suggested in the *Foreign Policy* article by Joaquin Villalobos, it is instructive to review the FMLN's assessment of U.S. policy as of last year. Its analysis can be found not only in the "Strategic Appraisal" document, but also in *Venceremos* (February-March 1988), the official FMLN publication available throughout the hemisphere in both Spanish and English.

The FMLN argued that U.S. foreign policy is in retreat generally and that flagging resolve in Central America could be transformed into a retreat from El Salvador in particular. As evidence of U.S. weakness, the FMLN pointed to 1) the U.S.-Soviet INF accord, 2)

the overall reduction in U.S. foreign aid, including to El Salvador, after Gramm-Rudman, 3) the emergence of the Group of Eight Contadora countries parallel to a stagnant Organization of American States, 4) the Esquipulas II accord and the impending (at that time) Congressional defeat of Contra military aid, and 5) growing fissures in bipartisan Congressional support for U.S. aid to El Salvador.

In the "Strategic Appraisal" document, the FMLN stated, "For revolutionary states and the socialist camp, negotiation is an expression of victory." It perceived U.S. willingness to negotiate as evidence of "the weakening of the Yankee administration, the contradictions at its center, the impossibility of its using all its forces, and the international isolation its policies have suffered."

It can be easily argued that in its general analysis the FMLN is again guilty of overconfidence, or "triumphalism" in revolutionary jargon. How the U.S. responds to the flurry of FMLN proposals, however, will in large part determine whether the FMLN must rethink its assessment of U.S. resolve in El Salvador. Therefore, those still willing to give the FMLN the benefit of the doubt should take a closer look at the organization itself. There are numerous reasons to question its sincerity and stated commitment to democratic principles.

A totalitarian organization

Founded in Havana in 1980 as a Marxist-Leninist guerrilla organization, the FMLN reiterated its ideology at mid-decade with the public announcement that it had started building a Marxist-Leninist party. The FMLN's allegiance to Marxism-Leninism has not since been disavowed.

Internally, the FMLN is rigidly structured in pyramidal Leninist fashion. The leadership brooks no deviation from the policy it sets down. Discipline is exacted by force. Those who question or veer

from the organization line are subject to execution in the name of "revolutionary justice."

Since 1975, when Joaquin Villalobos ordered the execution of Roque Dalton, murder has been a traditional means of resolving internal disputes among the FMLN leadership. In 1983, Commander Salvador Cayetano Carpio ordered the murder of Commander Ana Maria Gomez in Managua. Weeks later, Carpio died, reportedly a suicide. In the most recent case, former Commander Miguel Castellanos, who had left the FMLN in 1985, was murdered in February 1989 by an FMLN urban commando unit. The FMLN General Command issued a declaration that "revolutionary justice" had been carried out. There is reason to doubt the FMLN's stated commitment to political pluralism in light of its policy of "revolutionary justice" and totalitarian internal control.

The FMLN's totalitarian methods of control also extend beyond the organization itself into the communities where its influence is dominant. Indoctrination of civilians and the use of intimidation and executions to enforce discipline remains FMLN policy in guerrilla-held territory in northern El Salvador.

The FMLN has used similar methods in order to take control of the Salvadoran refugee camps in Honduras. The *New York Times* has reported that the Colomoncagua camp of more than 13,000 refugees is "ruled by 'coordination committees' of pro-guerrilla Salvadorans who wield almost absolute authority over their fellow refugees. Revolutionary zeal has become a mandatory part of daily life for camp residents, including the routine conscription of young people for rebel armies." Refugees who have managed to leave the camps have reported that camp leaders enforce their orders "through a variety of means ranging from manipulation of food rations and work assignments to physical abuse and even killing." ("Fear Rules the Salvadoran Refugees," Mark A. Uhlig, *New York Times*, 3 March

1989.) How does the FMLN explain that despite the fact of continuing war, thousands of refugees have asked the United High Commissioner on Refugees for assistance in leaving these camps to return home?

There is also the question of the actual size of the FMLN and its level of popular support. The current consensus on the number of guerrilla fighters is 6-7,000. That is down from approximately 12-15,000 in the early 1980s. After the 1984 election, the FMLN had to resort to forced recruitment to keep its ranks from dwindling further. Journalists and international organizations that work in conflict areas report that in recent years guerrilla ranks are increasingly made up of youths fifteen and younger ("Salvador's Young Caught in War's Web," Brook Larmer, *Christian Science Monitor*, 10 April 1989).

Democratic Convergence leaders who remain allied to the FMLN concede that, outside guerrilla ranks, the social base of the FMLN is no more than 50,000, approximately 1 percent of the total population. Yet the FMLN defends its use of violence with the argument that it is the authentic representative of the Salvadoran people.

Killing the mayors

If the FMLN is genuinely committed to political pluralism and democratic elections, why did it continue its attacks on the nation's 262 democratically elected municipal officials? In the twelve months preceding the presidential election, the FMLN threatened to kill any official who refused to resign from office. It backed up its threat by killing eight mayors and one provincial governor. By 19 March, 137 other officials had either resigned or left the towns they were elected to represent.

In January, the Salvadoran Corporation of Municipalities issued a call to its counterparts throughout Latin America for support in

denouncing the FMLN assault on the municipal government system. The FMLN charges that municipal officials are part of the military's counterinsurgency program and therefore justifiable military targets. What few observers have noted, however, is that these officials have been implementing the successful Municipalities-in-Action public improvements program designed by the Salvadoran government and U.S. AID.

In two years, approximately $75 million has been placed in the hands of these officials for road building, bridge repair, schools, and other improvements requested by the individual communities. Taking these programs out of the central bureaucracy and into the municipal system where they can be more effectively implemented has been clearly perceived by the FMLN as a *political* threat. For the first time, the government had created an effective system for providing services in the countryside. As of April 1989, the FMLN's policy to destroy this effort had not changed, despite international criticism and expressions of support for the Salvadoran mayors from their counterparts in the hemisphere.

By mid-March, the onus of responding to the FMLN's proposals fell heavily on the Salvadoran government and political parties. Yet it was the FMLN that persisted in terrorism and sabotage. In contrast, the Sandinista government in Nicaragua was insisting on the complete disarmament of the Contras before their reintegration into society, and facing little international pressure to do otherwise.

In El Salvador there exists a constitutional democracy, which allows allies of the FMLN to form political parties and run for president. Yet the FMLN demands that the constitution be changed for the sole purpose of allowing it to participate in elections at a time of its own choosing. Thus far, the FMLN has conceded little to the democratic system beyond rhetoric and promises. There is much evidence for questioning whether the FMLN really seeks to participate

in El Salvador's fragile democracy, or actually means to destroy it. While El Salvador desperately needs peace, and while no opportunity for widening further the democratic community should be lost, free peoples should remain wary of FMLN offerings.

APPENDIX I

INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED AND MEETINGS ATTENDED BY MEMBERS OF THE FREEDOM HOUSE DELEGATION (15-21 MARCH 1989), AND BY FREEDOM HOUSE STAFF MEMBERS AS PART OF THE CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION (13-15 FEBRUARY 1989) LED BY CONGRESSMAN DAVE MCCURDY (D-OKLA.)

JOSE NAPOLEON DUARTE - President of El Salvador.

ALFREDO CRISTIANI - Presidential candidate of the National Republican Alliance (ARENA).

FIDEL CHAVEZ MENA - Presidential candidate of the Christian Democratic Party (PDC).

GUILLERMO UNGO - Presidential candidate of the Democratic Convergence (CD).

JOSE RICARDO PERDOMO - President of the Central Elections Council (CCE).

FRANCISCO "CHICO" MERINO - Vice-presidential candidate of ARENA.

JOSE FRANCISCO BARRIENTOS - Vice-presidential candidate of the Christian Democratic Party (PDC).

MARIO RENI ROLDAN - Vice-presidential candidate of the Democratic Convergence (CD).

GEN. CARLOS EUGENIO VIDES CASANOVA - Minister of Defense.

COL. RENE EMILIO PONCE - Army Chief of Staff.

MARIA JULIA HERNANDEZ - Director of Tutela Legal, the human rights office of the Catholic church.

BENJAMIN CESTONI - Director of the government's Human Rights Commission of El Salvador.

RUBEN ZAMORA - Member of the Executive Committee of the Democratic Convergence (CD).

ARMANDO CALDERON SOL - Mayor of San Salvador, member of ARENA.

COL. (RET.) SIGIFREDO OCHOA - Member of the National Assembly, member of ARENA.

FATHER IGNACIO ELLACURIA - Rector of the University of Central America (UCA), San Salvador.

AMANDA CLARIBEL VILLATORO, JOSE LUIS GRANDE PRESA, SAMUEL MALDONADO - Members of the Executive Committee of the National Union of Workers and Peasants (UNOC).

HERALDO DIAZ, FEBE ELIZABETH VASQUEZ - Members of the Executive Committee of the National Unity of Salvadoran Workers (UNTS).

ROBERTO RODRIGUEZ - Director of the El Salvador office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR).

ANDREAS HALBACH - Director of the El Salvador office of the Inter-governmental Committee for Migration (ICM).

MIGUEL CASTELLANOS - Codirector of the Center for the Study of National Reality (CEREN), former FMLN commander, killed by the FMLN in San Salvador 16 February 1989.

AMBASSADOR WILLIAM G. WALKER - U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador.

DAVID B. DLOUHY - Deputy Chief of Mission, U.S. Embassy, San Salvador.

STEPHEN MACFARLAND - Political Counselor, U.S. Embassy, San Salvador.

COL. WAYNE WHEELER - Defense Attache, U.S. Embassy, San Salvador.

HENRY BASSFORD - AID Director, U.S. Embassy, San Salvador.

PHILLIP CHICOLA - Political Officer, U.S. Embassy, San Salvador.

APPENDIX II

THE DEPARTMENTS AND TOWNS MONITORED BY THE FREEDOM HOUSE DELEGATION ON ELECTION DAY.

Sensuntepeque
Ilobasco.

San Vicente
San Vicente.
San Sebastian.

Santa Ana
Santa Ana.
Coatepeque.

Nueva San Salvador
El Congo.
Quezaltepeque.
Cuidad Arce.
Lourdes.
Santa Tecla.
La Libertad.
Zaragoza

Sonsonate
Sonsonate.
Izalco.
Armenia.

Zacatecoluca
Zacatecoluca.
Oloquilta.

Cojutepeque
Cojutepeque.
San Martin.

San Salvador
San Salvador.
Soyapango.

THIS REPORT IS based on the work of a six-member Freedom House observer mission to the 19 March 1989 presidential election in El Salvador. The observer mission was led by Freedom House trustee Ambassador Angier Biddle Duke and Freedom House Executive Director R. Bruce McColm. William C. Doherty, Jr., Freedom House trustee and executive director of the American Institute for Free Labor Development of the AFL-CIO, also monitored the election as a member of the official U.S. observer delegation.

The other members of the mission were Douglas W. Payne, Freedom House hemispheric studies director; Walter Naegle, executive director of the Bayard Rustin Fund; Barbara Futterman, Freedom House Exchange coordinator; and journalist Biddle Duke.

Mr. Payne is the principal author of this report.

Freedom House extends its gratitude to the International Rescue Committee, especially Robyn Ziebert, IRC regional director for Central America, for advance preparation and logistical assistance.

FREEDOM HOUSE IS an independent nonprofit organization that monitors human rights and political freedom around the world. Established in 1941, Freedom House believes that effective advocacy of civil rights at home and human rights abroad must be grounded in fundamental democratic values and principles.

In international affairs, Freedom House continues to focus attention on human rights violations by oppressive regimes, both of the left and the right. At home, we stress the need to guarantee all citizens not only equal rights under law, but equal opportunity for social and economic advancement.

Freedom House programs and activities include bimonthly and annual publications, conferences and lecture series, public advocacy, ongoing research of political and civil liberties around the globe, and selected, on-site monitoring to encourage fair elections.

ISBN: 0-932088-43-0

Freedom House • 48 East 21st Street • New York, N.Y. 10010